



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

June 25, 2019

The Honorable Peter Courtney  
President of the Senate  
900 Court St. NE, S-201  
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Tina Kotek  
Speaker of the House  
900 Court St. NE, Rm. 269  
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Herman E. Baertschiger Jr.  
Senate Republican Leader  
900 Court St. NE, S-403  
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Carl Wilson  
House Republican Leader  
900 Court St. NE, H-395  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senators Courtney and Baertschiger, and Representatives Kotek and Wilson,

It is our understanding that a measure (HB 2329) is pending before the Oregon legislature that could have a major adverse impact on the preservation of archaeological and heritage materials in Oregon. We respectfully request that HB 2329 be amended to require that all large-scale renewable energy projects comply with all required environmental and cultural resources reviews.

SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 7,500 members, SAA represents professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has 370 members who reside, teach, and work in Oregon.

HB 2329 would exempt certain large-scale renewable energy projects from having to undertake substantive cultural and environmental resources reviews prior to receiving construction permits. Without such reviews, this kind of development could lead to the widespread damage or even destruction of Oregon's cultural resources and heritage, including tribal cultural patrimony, as the ancestral territories of several Native American tribes lie within the prime solar development zones.

Archaeologists and other cultural resources professionals do not want to stop development. We work every day with developers under state and federal law to ensure that projects are completed, while ensuring that the irreplaceable remains of our past are also preserved.

We strongly urge you to amend HB 2329 to ensure that all large-scale renewable energy projects are subject to substantive review processes, as is required under current law, to protect Oregon's cultural heritage.

Regards,

Joe Watkins, Ph.D., RPA  
President